

**Job announcement:** Mississippi Rural Regional Pilot Initiative located in the Fifth Circuit Court District.

**Job Title:** Full-time staff attorney

**Salary:** Between \$90,000.00 and \$119,000.00 (depending on experience); retirement and health benefits.

**Job Description:** Representation of indigent clients accused of felonies and any associated misdemeanors in the Fifth Circuit Court district, which includes Grenada, Montgomery, Carroll, Winston, Choctaw, Webster and Attala Counties.

**Job essentials:**

- Willingness to meet clients in correctional facilities at, or near time of arrest
- Knowledge of the pertinent laws of the State of Mississippi, and the ability to apply the law to the particular facts of the case
- Attendance and preparedness at initial appearances, bail hearings, preliminary hearings, and all necessary appearances in Circuit Court, including jury trials.
- Compliance with all procedural guidelines in all courts, and compliance with all Rules of Criminal Procedure, and Rules of Professional Responsibility.
- Robust Pre-trial motion practice
- Zealous and compassionate advocacy for indigent defendants

**Minimum Qualifications:** Must possess a Juris Doctorate and be licensed to practice in all Mississippi State Courts; be in good standing with the Mississippi Bar Association and Courts of this State.

**Required Skills and Knowledge:**

- Knowledge of the MS Rules of Criminal Procedures, Rules of Evidence, and Criminal Statutes, as well as the MS and United States Constitution.
- Ability to conduct legal research, prepare pleadings and make legal arguments
- Familiarity with MEC
- Maintain confidentiality with clients
- Regularly communicate with clients, providing timely updates
- Meet clients in correctional facilities, regularly
- Maintain professional relationships with clients, court personnel, attorneys, judges, and other office staff.
- Ability to provide availability on limited weekends.
- Ability to empower clients to make decisions about their cases, by communicating effectively, properly preparing with clients, researching issues for them, and assisting them in understanding the law and procedures as it applies to their circumstances.
- To attend and complete required Continuing education, focused on indigent/criminal defense
- Possess a valid drivers license and have reliable transportation

Submit resumes and any references to Richard Carter at [richardcarterlaw@gmail.com](mailto:richardcarterlaw@gmail.com)

# Mississippi Rural Regional Pilot Initiative

## ❗ PROBLEM

### Rural communities face critical lawyer shortages

Legal deserts are places with too few lawyers to meet local needs, including the need for prompt, effective, and conflict-free representation for indigent defendants. Mississippi's law schools and bar association agree that many communities across the state are facing a crisis of lawyer scarcity.

## ✅ PLAN

**The Office of State Public Defender has partnered with the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center at SMU Dedman School of Law to open a rural regional public defender pilot site.**

The 2025 Legislature provided funding to launch the initiative. The pilot will serve the seven rural counties of the Fifth Circuit Court District. Appropriation for year one will allow for three full-time attorneys, one investigator, and an administrative assistant. The pilot will handle felony cases from arrest to disposition, as well as any associated misdemeanors.

## 👍 BENEFITS

### The initiative will:

- Preserve existing public defender positions
- Decrease the caseloads of local public defenders
- Alleviate the challenge of locating conflict counsel
- Represent arrested people at the earliest possible stage
- Deliver continuous representation to arrested people
- Assist judges to make better-informed pretrial release decisions
- Recruit lawyers and law students to the region
- Evaluate and report pilot results to support possible replication

## Contact Information

### OSPD

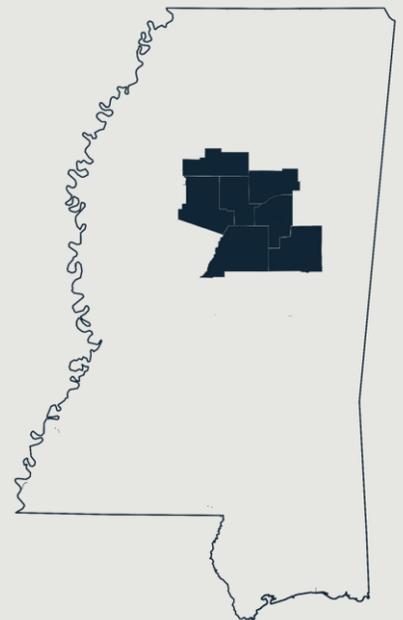
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### Pilot Office

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## Fifth Circuit Court District



**Counties include:  
Attala, Carroll, Choctaw,  
Grenada, Montgomery,  
Webster, and Winston**

